

Whitsel Lewis Civil War Diary

S834

1864

1 folder

Manuscript & Rare Books Division
Indiana State Library

Finding Aid by: Nikki Stoddard Schofield, March 2012

Historical Note:

The 87th Indiana was organized at South Bend on the 28th of August, 1862, and moved to Indianapolis, where it mustered into three-years' service on the 31st of August.

Whitsel Lewis begins "A Union Soldier's Diary" on July 2, 1864 and ends on September 5, 1864. The entries are only one sentence or a short paragraph for each day. He participated in the Atlanta Campaign.

Donald Lewis Osborn, 413 North Liberty Street, Independence, Missouri, copyrighted this diary in 1964.

Scope and Content Note:

On July 3, Whitsel was in Marietta, and on the 7th was on Kennesaw Mountain close to Atlanta. His regiment guarded rations for the army. On the 8th, they had a fight with the Rebels. On the 10th, they captured a factory where a lot of women were working.

On July 13, Whitsel saw Atlanta from a hill, and said "it looks like a big town." On July 17, the 4th Corp drove the Rebels back from the Chattahoochee River, over which the Union pontoons were then laid, so Whitsel and his men could cross. On July 19, the Federals retreated into the woods because of the heavy Confederate fire. "We lost a good many out of our brigade this evening."

On July 22, Whitsel wrote: "The Rebs left their works last night and we are after them today." The next day, he stated that Union guns were shelling Atlanta. On the 25th, Whitsel describes "a little fun last night" when Union soldiers rose up in their rifle pits and yelled in order to get a fix on the location of Confederate cannons, which enabled them to locate three pieces of artillery previously unknown to them.

On July 26, he tells about the sharpened stakes in front of their lines to deter the enemy from reaching them. The next day, he writes about railroads being destroyed. On the 28th, he gives a count of killed and wounded in the battle. On July 31, Mr. Lewis writes about building a little breast work to keep shells from hitting them, and states: "this is awful hot weather here now."

On August 3, they got orders to march, and stopped to build works near an old mill. The following day, they fought a battle and “captured a lot of rebs.” On the 7th, Union skirmishers had to fall back because the Rebels were too strong for them. On August 9, Whitsel stated the lines were 500 or 600 yards apart, and both sides could shoot into each other’s lines.

Trading Northern coffee for Southern tobacco took place on August 12. Whitsel wrote: “it was a nice sight to see there were a good many went out to trade with the rebs today.”

On August 13 and 14, Whitsel was put in charge of driving a six-mule team for the 3rd Division hospital. On the 15th, he went forging for the sick.

On September 1, Mr. Lewis wrote: “our men had a big battle with the rebs today. They drove the rebs out of their breastworks.” This was the Battle of Jonesboro. On September 3, Whitsel went to Jonesboro, which had been burned. He mentioned the good corn crop. His last entry on September 5 tells about his visit to Atlanta.

Item Listing

Folder 1. Civil War Diary for three months in 1864

July 1864	Pages 1-6
August 1864	Pages 6-10
September 1864	Pages 10-11
Undated	Unused envelop with imprinted return address: 6454 Broadway, Indianapolis, Indiana 46220.

Collection Information

<i>Size of Collection:</i>	Diary of 11 typed pages
<i>Collection Dates:</i>	July 2 through September 5, 1864
<i>Provenance:</i>	Smith Library, September 17, 1968
<i>Access :</i>	The collection is open for research use
<i>Restrictions:</i>	None
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<i>Language:</i>	Materials are entirely in English.
<i>Alternate Formats:</i>	None
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<i>Notes:</i>	None